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## Department of State

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

Argentina

10/16/81

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ACTION ARA-16

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INFO OCT-31 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-15 OIC-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
N-01 10-15 NSC-05 NSAE-00 SY-05 HA-05 L-03  
TRSE-00 PM-09 PA-01 MCT-02 ICAE-00 SP-02 SPRS-02  
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R 162022Z OCT 81  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1266  
INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS  
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA

SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7467

E.O. 12865: N/A  
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, AR  
SUBJECT: MOTHERS' DAY PROTEST MARCH

REF: BUENOS AIRES 7165

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE MOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DO MAYO AND HALF A DOZEN OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS MOUNTED A MAJOR DEMONSTRATION OCTOBER 15 TO RALLY POPULAR OPINION BEHIND THEIR EFFORTS TO PREPRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT INTO AN ACCOUNTING FOR THE DISAPPEARED AND OTHER LIBERALIZATION MEASURES. THE DEMONSTRATION WAS PEACEFUL AND WITHOUT SERIOUS INCIDENT. WRITTEN POLITICAL DEMANDS OF THE ORGANIZERS WERE ACCEPTED BY THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE BUT IT IS UNLIKELY TO FORCE THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCELERATE ITS GRADUAL APPROACH TO POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. MEANWHILE, ONE VIDELEY-READ COMMENTATOR ALLEGED THE ARGENTINE MILITARY ARE COMPILING LISTS OF THOSE "DISAPPEARED" WHO CAN BE PROVED DEAD, FOR PUBLIC RELEASE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH CONSIDERABLE ADVANCE BUILDUP OF THE MOTHERS' WEEKLY APPEARANCE IN THE PLAZA FACING GOVERNMENT HOUSE, SEVEN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS JOINED IN THE SILENT PARADE THURSDAY AFTERNOON TO DRAMATIZE THEIR DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO THEIR VARIOUS CLAIMS. THE DEMONSTRATION WAS HELD TO MOTHERS DAY, WHICH IN ARGENTINA IS CELEBRATED SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18. NOTABLE IN THE THURSDAY DEMONSTRATION, ONE OF THE LARGEST TURNOUTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS IN RECENT HISTORY, WAS THE PRESENCE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS, A SPRINKLING OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC POLITICIANS AND OTHER IDENTIFIED WITH LIBERAL CAUSES.

3. SO WAS THE PETITION TO PRESIDENT VIOLA, WHICH WAS HANDED TO A RECEPTIONIST IN THE PALACE IN 1980 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL, WHO HEADED A DELEGATION OF THE ORGANIZING GROUPS' REPRESENTATIVES. GOING WELL BEYOND THE STANDARD APPEAL FOR AN ACCOUNTING OF THE DISAPPEARED, THE RAISON D'ETRE OF THE MOTHERS' MOVEMENT, IT WAS MORE GENERALLY POLITICAL IN NATURE, LISTING AMONG OTHER THINGS DEMANDS FOR A LIFTING OF THE STATE OF SEIGE, RELEASE OF PEN PRISONERS WHO ARE HELD WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL, AN END TO PENAL JUDGEMENTS BY EXCEPTIONAL OR "IRREGULAR" TRIBUNALS, AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THAT IS FULLY CONSONANT WITH THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION.

4. SIGNING THE DOCUMENT BESIDES PEREZ ESQUIVEL WAS THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MOTHERS' MOVEMENT, THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY OF HUMAN RIGHTS, THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, THE ARGENTINE LEAGUE FOR THE RIGHTS OF

MAN, THE COMMISSION OF FAMILIES OF POLITICAL DIS-APPEARED AND DETAINED, AND THE CENTER OF LEGAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES (CELS). PROMINENT IN THE RANKS OF THE DEMONSTRATORS WERE TWO OF THE MOST PROGRESSIVE VOICES IN THE ARGENTINE EPISCOPATE, MONSIGNORS JORGE NOVAK OF THE LOWER-CLASS WORKING BUENOS AIRES DIOCECES OF OUILHES AND JAIME DE NEVARES, BISHOP OF PROVINCE, TOGETHER WITH PROTESTANT CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES AND RABBI MARSHALL MEYER. WELL-KNOWN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL FIGURES WERE ALSO REPORTED BY THE PRESS TO HAVE PARTICIPATED, WHICH IS NOTEWORTHY SINCE MOST ACTIVE POLITICIANS, WHATEVER THEIR STRIPE, ESCHEW IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MOTHERS AND THEIR ALLIES AS WELL AS THEIR CAUSES.

5. MEDIA ACCOUNTS OF THE NUMBER OF THOSE JOINING THE MOTHERS IN THEIR THURSDAY SILENT WALK AROUND THE OBELISK

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part (X) In Full

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N-01 10-15 NSC-05 NSAE-00 SY-05 HA-06 L-03  
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ALSO SPECULATES THAT THE HIERARCHY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ARGENTINA AND SOME POLITICAL LEADERS, ESPECIALLY RADICAL CHIEF RICARDO BALBIN JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH LAST MONTH, MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE MILITARY'S DECISION TO INITIATE WORK ON A PARTIAL ACCOUNTING OF THE WAR'S CASUALTIES. THIS WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE POSITION OF THE RADICALS AND MANY OTHER POLITICIANS THAT THE DISAPPEARED ARE IN FACT DEAD, THAT IT IS SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE RECTIFIED, AND THAT THE COUNTRY MUST NOW GET ON WITH BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE. SHLAUDEMAN

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IN THE PLAZA VARY MARKEDLY, FROM 500 CALCULATED BY A DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE WHO OBSERVED THE EVENT, TO ONE TO TWO THOUSAND BY SOME PRESS ACCOUNTS; THE MOTHERS' AVERAGE WEEKLY TURNOUT IS A COUPLE HUNDRED. PEREZ ESQUIVEL AND THE CATHOLIC PRIESTS LED THE MARCH AND THEN BROKE OFF TO PRESENT THEMSELVES AND THEIR PETITION AT THE PALACE, WHERE THEY SAID THEY WERE CORDIALLY RECEIVED BY SECURITY OFFICERS.

6. POLICE PRESENCE WAS HEAVIER THAN USUAL, OWING TO ADVANCE PRESS WORK DONE LARGELY BY THE MOTHERS. SOME YOUNGER PEOPLE WHO JOINED THE DEMONSTRATION AS THEY LEFT THE PLAZA WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN DETAINED BRIEFLY AFTER SHOUTING "FREEDOM" AND OTHER SLOGANS; THEY WERE TAKEN TO A NEARBY POLICE STATION WHERE, AFTER IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES, THEY WERE RELEASED. THEIR NUMBER WAS VARIOUSLY REPORTED AT BETWEEN THREE AND FIFTY. ONE YOUTH CLAIMED HE HAD BEEN PISTOL-WHIPPED BY A PLAIN-CLOTHESMAN, BUT WAS UNABLE TO IDENTIFY HIS ASSAILANT, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE MOTHERS CLAIMED THEIR OFFICE PHONE SERVICE HAD BEEN INTERRUPTED FOR 24 HOURS PROCEEDING THE DEMONSTRATION, AS HAD THE PHONE AT PEREZ ESQUIVEL'S PEACE AND JUSTICE OFFICE. TO KEEP THE PLAZA CLEAR FROM ANY CONGREGATION OF CASUAL OBSERVERS, AND PERHAPS DELIBERATELY TO FRUSTRATE A HIGH TURNOUT, THE AUTHORITIES PROHIBITED SUBWAYS AND OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT FROM STOPPING AT THEIR USUAL STATIONS NEAR THE SCENE.

7. WHILE THE PUBLICITY GENERATED BY THE EVENT PROBABLY WAS ENCOURAGING TO THE ORGANIZERS AS WAS THE AUGMENTED NUMBER OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATING, THE "MOTHERS' DAY MARCH" IS UNLIKELY TO FORCE THE GOVERNMENT OUT OF ITS GRADUAL APPROACH TO POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION INTO A FASTER PACE. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT PRESIDENT VIOLA AT HIS OCTOBER 1 PRESS CONFERENCE RATHER FIRMLY STATED HE WOULD NOT RECEIVE MUCH LESS DEAL WITH HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE ACTIVITIES WERE DIRECTED AT POLITICAL ENDS (REFTEL). NEITHER IS THE GOVERNMENT'S REPORTED COMPILATION OF LISTS OF PROVEN DEAD IN THE "DIRTY WAR," IF TRUE, DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO HUMAN RIGHTS PRESSURES AT HOME. THE ALLEGED COMPILATION WAS REPORTED IN THIS MORNING'S (OCTOBER 16) LA PRENSA BY GADFLY COLUMNIST J. IGLESIAS ROUCO, WHO SAID LEGAL COUNSEL IN ALL THREE SERVICES ARE COMBING THEIR RECORDS TO COME UP WITH A DEATH TOLL IN THE GUERRILLA WARFARE OF THE 1970'S, TO BE MADE PUBLIC BY THE END OF THE YEAR. IGLESIAS REPORTS THAT THE JUNTA AGREED TO THIS EXERCISE AFTER ARMY CINC GALTIERI'S SUMMER VISIT TO WASHINGTON, WHERE "NORTH AMERICAN POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS" REPEATED THEIR INTEREST IN SEEING SUCH ACTION TAKEN, AS THEY HAD WITH THEN PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE VIOLA DURING HIS VISIT IN MARCH. IGLESIAS

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